

Today's
The Herald-Palladium
included inside



Chieftains
roll Tigers in
home opener
Page B1

Stay Safe

Be mindful of your surroundings, especially in unfamiliar or dimly lit areas. Trust your instincts - if something feels off, move to a safer location if possible. Encourage neighbors to establish a neighborhood watch program to keep our communities safe.

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Dowagiac News

Established 1897 • Serving Dowagiac, Sister Lakes and Cassopolis **SEPTEMBER 20, 2025** leaderpub.com • A publication of The Herald-Palladium **\$4**

St. John's Preschool and Day Care closes after 43 years

By **DAVID SCHMIDT**
Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church

On Friday, Sept. 12, the doors of St. John's Lutheran Preschool and Day Care closed its doors for the last time.

In 1982, St. John's started a Lutheran Elementary Grade School, teaching children from kindergarten to 8th Grade, the "4 R's," Reading! Writing! Arithmetic! And Religion! We also created a preschool and a day care center to help families in our city prepare their children for school as well as



SCHMIDT

having a safe place to leave their children until Mom and Dad got home from work. Many families of St. John's invested not just their money, and their time, but also their manual labor to build that school and to keep it going.

In 2010, due to a lack of children in our congregation the congregation needed to close its Grade School. However, they were able to keep the Preschool and the

Day Care up and running. We wanted to give parents not only a safe place where their children could learn, but also a place where they could learn about Jesus and the salvation He came to bring us.

Over the past four years, many things began to change. With dwindling numbers of children who took part in the Preschool, and with dwindling numbers of parents who took advantage of a Christian minded Day Care, it became harder to keep the doors open. But the

congregation did keep the doors open, because as Dr. Charles Burling, President of St. John's said, "we poured everything we could possibly pour into this school, to make sure we could provide a Christ-centered environment for the children and the families of our community." However, for the last three years the congregation lost around \$30,000 a year because income from the Preschool did not keep up with the expenses.

See **ST. JOHN'S**, page A6



The Herald-Palladium included with the News

Starting today, readers of the print edition of the Dowagiac News will get two newspapers in one.

Each week, the weekend edition of The Herald-Palladium is being inserted into the papers to give readers more news about Southwest Michigan.

The Herald-Palladium, based in St. Joseph, has reported on Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties for 157 years.

Paxton Media Group, owner of The Herald-Palladium, recently purchased Leader Publications, which publishes the Dowagiac News and Niles Star.

"We're excited to share The HP with readers of the Leader newspapers," said David Holgate, publisher of The Herald-Palladium and group president of PMG Community Newsgroup. "We're proud of the work we produce at The HP, and we are impressed with the tradition of journalism represented in the Star and News. Together, readers are getting the most complete coverage of Southwest Michigan available."

In addition to local news and sports coverage of Southwest Michigan, the weekend HP edition includes:

- Focus section, with lifestyle features, columns and the Los Angeles Times weekend crossword puzzle
- Food page, with local food columnist Jane Ammeson's great recipes and insights into the Southwest Michigan food scene
- Automotive page, with car reviews and news about the automotive industry
- Business page, with national and local business news, and business advice columns
- Market page, with information about stocks and other market reports
- Home & Garden page, with gardening and decorating tips, and a weekly house plan
- TV pages, with detailed TV listings for the coming week
- Daily comics and puzzles pages, with advice columnist R. Eric Thomas
- Four pages of color weekend comics

"For anyone who loves to read, this huge combination of news and featured content will be irresistible," said Rich Cains, publisher of Leader Publications. "This is truly the 'whole package' for subscribers and advertisers motivated in capturing a significantly larger audience."



Photos by Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

More than 100 guests from Dowagiac and beyond attended the Dowagiac Area History Museum's annual Keep History Alive Fundraiser Wednesday evening at Marion Magnolia Farms.

Keeping history alive

Annual museum fundraiser raises \$43,000

By **MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — More than 100 guests from Dowagiac and beyond attended the Dowagiac Area History Museum's annual Keep History Alive Fundraiser Wednesday evening at Marion Magnolia Farms.

The fundraiser raised approximately \$43,000 — surpassing its annual goal — according to museum director Steve Arseneau.

Keep History Alive was created in 2017 as a way for the museum to raise general operation support and reach its fundraising goals for each year, with money generated via live and silent auctions.

The event featured live and silent auctions, a raffle drawing, food from Oak and Ash and a cash bar. More than 100 items were available for auction, including tickets to college sporting events, gift certificates



More than 100 guests from Dowagiac and beyond attended the Dowagiac Area History Museum's annual Keep History Alive Fundraiser Wednesday evening at Marion Magnolia Farms.

icates and goods from area businesses, local antiques not from the museum's collection, local history artifacts and more.

According to Arseneau, three-quarters of the museum's operational budget comes from fundraising efforts. He thanked the museum's board, the Friends

of the Dowagiac Area History Museum, the sponsors and auction donors, Marion Magnolia Farms, Wounded Minnow Saloon, Baker's Rhapsody and Lindy's Restaurant for providing everything for the event.

"Everyone had a great time at the event and the funds raised exceeded our goal,"

Arseneau said. "The live auction was especially lively last night with one Round Oak print going for \$5,500. That had the room buzzing. The event didn't just happen — from Marion Magnolia Farms and food vendors to the board members and all the attendees who bid high and bid often — thank you."

Museum receives \$1M endowment gift, plans layout transformation

By **MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — A \$1 million endowment gift will help secure the future of the Dowagiac Area History Museum as it prepares for a major exhibit renovation.

The Dowagiac Area History Museum shared updates with its supporters at its annual Keep History Alive fundraising event on Wednesday night. Mayor Don Lyons and his wife, Joan, have committed \$1 million to a new endowment

fund for the museum. The Lyons' commitment is being funded progressively and will accrue income through 2032, when the funds will be available for use.

This endowment is being managed through the Michigan Gateway Community Foundation, an independent third party that helps individuals and families develop strategic plans for charitable contributions to their community and assists with funding oversight.

See **MUSEUM**, page A6



Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

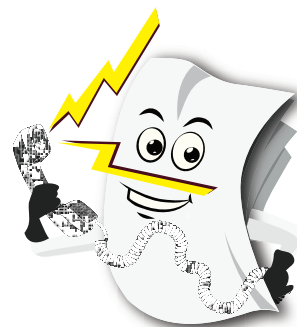
Dowagiac Mayor Don Lyons speaks during Wednesday's Keep History Alive Fundraiser at Marion Magnolia Farms.



Today's obituaries
Pages A3

Namita Samadder, Steven James Robinson, David John Crespo Jr., Robert Alan Snider, Norman Stephen Williams, Bonnie Josephine Sandburg, William Edward Tuttle Jr., Donna O'Keefe, Maxine Pittman, Gordon "Rick" Ricky Sexton

Inside today's Herald-Palladium			
Automotive	C6	Focus	B1
Business	C4	Food	B7
Comics	B5	Home & Garden	C7
		Opinion	B6
		Puzzles	B3
		Television	D3



FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ Why did our area become the wild west of cannabis licenses? I'm ok with cannabis, but now we have more locations than banks, gas stations and grocery stores combined.

■ Senator Mitch McConnell and incompetent President Biden created this mess. I award them the "Benedict Arnold Trophy" along with Trump, Congress and the Supreme Court for helping get Trump reelected. All of Trump's policies create chaos and confusion worldwide.

■ The Dowagiac News is "serving Dowagiac, Sister Lakes and Cassopolis" less and less. Since the switch to being a publication of The Herald-Palladium it is so general ... including sports as far away as Chicago, general behavior items, etc. Keep it local.

■ Divide and conquer! Remember those words. Who benefits from a divided USA? Trump is doing Putin's dirty work and China's. Wake up America before we are all speaking Mandarin.

■ Great story on the backpacks and school kids. I have been saying this for years... having kids carrying around 20 lbs. of books is ridiculous and irresponsible.

■ It's about time the Lions finally got it together. The Bears are a great team..... NOT.

■ Charlie's death saddened me. We cannot allow our Freedom of Speech to ever be silenced. We all have a voice and need to use it.

■ Trump's tariffs are beginning to catch up with jobs and the economy. Now that our retailers have plowed through their merchandise buying sprees, we are seeing higher prices as a direct result of the taxes imposed on our own people by our own government. Wake up, America! China ain't paying the tariffs, you are.

■ Vaccinations saved us from polio. How can Florida be serious about not requiring this vaccination among others? Are you kidding me? How can lawmakers possibly think this is a good thing? Ask your doctor.....

■ The Alaska meeting really slowed down Putin..... Now he is attacking Poland and Romania. He won't stop. He needs to save face. He is totally fine with the killing.

Buchanan student crowned Miss Apple Festival 2025

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Apple Festival Royalty History

Jr. Miss Queens

1998 – Aimee Davis, 1999 – Mandi Robson, 2000 – Jessica Cornelius, 2001 Jaclyn Mumma, 2002 – Dana Vorrath, 2003 – Whitney Spain, 2004 – Danielle Foster, 2005 – Stephanie Stanton, 2006 – Tiffany Rogers, 2007 – Rachel Zeider, 2008 – Allie Schoenleber, 2009 – Hannah Montgomery, 2010 – Miranda Bailey, 2011 – Danielle Villa, 2012 – Ellie Hurd, 2013 – Alexis Garcia, 2014 – Mackenzie Wideman, 2015 – Tressy Mazumder, 2016 – Kara West, 2017 – Carsyn Franz, 2018 – Savannah Marinelli, 2019 – Baylee Davis, 2021 – Audrey Kuehn, 2023 – Aleyna Vollman, 2024 – Lillian Justis, 2025 – Tala Carlin

Former Miss Apple Festival Queens

1977 – Michele Miller, 1978 – Rhonda De Jong, 1979 – Tracey Tiernan, 1980 – Cara Hankila, 1981 – Danette Porter, 1982 – Shelly Town, 1983 – Jennifer Butler, 1984 – Vicki Vite, 1985 – Stephanie Lolmaugh, 1986 – Vicki Westphal, 1987 – Cindy Lamb, 1988 – Enca Webber, 1989 – KK. Gano, 1990 – Jennifer Johnson, 1991 – Laurie Coleman, 1992 – Shannon Masier, 1993 – Summer Hallwood/Melissa Wolfinger, 1994 – Latonya Burrows, 1995 – Allison Hayes, 1996 Jessica Mark, 1997 – Sarah Durren,



Photo provided

Front row, from left: Princess Avery, Prince Elijah. Back row, from left: Miss 2nd Runner-Up Delandah VanDyke, Miss 1st Runner-Up, Aleyna Vollman, Miss Apple Festival and Miss Congeniality 2025 Sophia Madison, Jr. Miss Apple Festival Tala Carlin, Jr. Miss 1st Runner Up Natalie Chester, Jr. Miss Congeniality Savannah Matlock, Jr. Miss 2nd Runner Up Mia Lee Lemna.

1998 – Leha Dee Whitt, 1999 – Elisha Bailey, 2000 – Christina Hartman, 2001 – Tiffany Griffin, 2002 – Tara Teshka, 2003 – Elizabeth Thomson, 2004 – Ashley Hullinger, 2005 – Dana Vorrath, 2006 – Angel Brown, 2007 – Elizabeth Miller, 2008 – Lauren Leonard, 2009 Alexandria Hemphill, 2010 – Courtney Brittain, 2011 – Sarah Long, 2012 – Miranda Bailey, 2013 – Kelsie Patrick, 2014 – Haley Akuy, 2015 – Ellie Hurd, 2015 – Kimberly West, 2017 – Hallie Curzine, 2018 – Audrey Bakerson, 2019 – Aubrey Allen, 2021 – Trinity Heighway, 2022 – Olivia Paturalski, 2023 – Dwonna Cross, 2024 – Audrey Kusho, 2025 – Sophia Madison

SMC music majors hear renowned trombonist

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College music majors were treated Sept. 12 to a guest speaker, trombonist Tim Coffman.

Coffman, a performer and educator in the Chicago area, was in town to perform Sept. 13 at the South Haven Jazz Festival with the Lake Effect Jazz Big Band through a Jupiter Music grant.

Coffman began by playing a 1941 Billie Holiday ballad, "Lover Man," accompanied by a play-along track on his laptop he pulled from YouTube.

He started with the melody, then "hot-dogged around that," demonstrating improvisation and practicing by incorporating scale exercises into his solo.

He amplified some of his points by playing piano, using a metronome application on his phone for a one-minute display of tonguing precision. He admitted he is unable to do circular breathing or flutter tonguing.

"By playing basic voicings in all 12 keys, I can get through thousands of tunes," he said. "Learn the piano."

The 12 keys in music, the dozen distinct pitch classes, are represented by the 12 notes of the chromatic scale: C, C-sharp/D-flat, D, D-sharp/E-flat, E, F, F-sharp/G-flat, G, G-sharp/A-flat, A, A-sharp/B-flat, and B.

Each of these 12 notes can serve as the "tonic" or home note for both a major key and a minor key, resulting in



Photo provided

Southwestern Michigan College music majors were treated Sept. 12 to a guest speaker, trombonist Tim Coffman.

24 possible keys total.

"Jazz is basically a legato art form," Coffman said.

Legato, an Italian musical term, means "tied together" and refers to a smooth, connected playing style where notes flow seamlessly into one another. Legato is the opposite of staccato.

"We have two huge challenges with the trombone," Coffman said. "One, we're in the bass clef, lower so we're trying to be heard and the slide when you're trying to play fast and with clarity. One of my friends jokes that we improvise on a slide whistle. It's preposterous, this decision I made in fourth grade that's totally ruined my life."

Coffman, whose mother played trombone, added, "I was at school in Dallas, Texas, before we moved to Baltimore, Md., and Chicago and took a musical aptitude test to be in band. I'd already taken a couple of years of piano lessons. What did I want to play? My mom suggested

trombone because she had one in the closet. She was a music major and played in the University of Minnesota marching band in the 1950s, which was unusual for a woman."

Coffman, a graduate of the Indiana University Jazz Studies program, has performed professionally with Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin, Lady Gaga, Andy Williams, Barry Manilow, the Temptations, the O'Jays, Paul Anka, Johnny Mathis, Natalie Cole and Lou Rawls, among many others.

He performed with the Chicago Symphony as lead trombonist for the Duke Ellington "Nutcracker" and on the recording of "Porgy and Bess" featuring previous SMC visitor Clark Terry and the Chicago Jazz Orchestra. That recording was nominated for Jazz Album of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association.

In 2009, Coffman performed in Germany for two weeks with Arturo Sandoval. In 2022, he toured with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Coffman started teaching at North Central College in Naperville, Ill., in 2015. He was on the jazz studies faculty at DePaul University from 1997-2021.

His recording, "Crossroads," is available on the Blujazz label. He has been on the faculty at the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop at the University of Louisville since 1992.

He is married to Becky and has two children, Daniel and Sarah, all musicians.

Star of 'Jesus Christ Superstar' to visit Wonderland Cinema

NILES — A classic film and its lead actor will be returning to the big screen in Niles later this month.

The timeless rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar, The Farewell Tour" comes to the big screen for a special one-night showing at Wonderland Cinema at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 30. Fans will have the rare opportunity to meet Ted Neeley, the actor and musician who portrayed Jesus in the 1973 film.

Tickets are just \$5 and can be purchased online, through the app, or in person.

A meet and greet with Ted Neeley will take place at 6 p.m., with an additional opportunity immediately following the movie. Guests



NEELEY

In addition, exclusive promotional items will be available for purchase, giving fans the chance to take home a piece of this unforgettable evening.

"This event is more than a movie – it's a chance to connect with a piece of cinematic and musical history," said Scott Moore, owner of Wonderland Cinema. "Welcoming Ted Neeley to Niles makes this screening truly special."

Woman struck, killed by vehicle in Niles

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A 56-year-old Niles woman was killed after being struck by a vehicle Tuesday morning, according to the Berrien County Sheriff's Office.

At approximately 6:58 a.m. Tuesday, emergency personnel were dispatched to the corner of Broadway and South Third St., in the City of Niles for a vehicle vs pedestrian injury crash. Upon arrival personnel found Namita Samadder with serious head injuries.

Samadder was treated at the scene by EMS and fire-

fighters before being transported to Corewell Health Niles Hospital. She was later transferred to Memorial Hospital South Bend, where she passed away.

Investigators determined that Samadder was attempting to cross Third St. at the Southwest corner when she was struck by a vehicle driven by 59-year-old David Roeder, of Niles, that was attempting to make a right hand turn from east-bound Broadway Street to S. Third Street. The Berrien County Sheriff's Department Accident Reconstruction Unit assisted with the investigation.

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Rural hospitals often scrap labor and delivery services after mergers, study finds

By **ANNA CLAIRE VOLLERS**
Stateline.org (TNS)

Rural hospitals are less likely to offer obstetric services after they’ve been acquired by a larger health system, leading to mixed outcomes for mothers and babies, according to new research.

It’s part of an accelerating trend that’s reshaped how Americans get health care: Larger health systems gobble up smaller facilities in a bid for financial stability.

“The hospital industry has undergone tremendous transformation over the past few decades, with nearly 1,600 mergers between 1998 and 2021,” said Martin Gaynor, a coauthor of the study and emeritus professor of economics and public policy at Carnegie Mellon, in a statement.

Those large-scale changes to the health system can affect costs, quality and access to care, he said.

Over the past five years, more than 100 rural hospitals have stopped delivering babies or announced they’ll stop in 2025, according to the most recent data from the Center for Healthcare Quality & Payment Reform. Less than half of rural hospitals still offer labor and delivery services.

Gaynor and a team of researchers from Carnegie Mellon, Northwestern University and the University of Georgia examined how hospital mergers have affected access to obstetric care in rural areas, and the quality of that care. They found that rural hospitals were part of more than 450 mergers from 2006-2019.

Once those rural hospitals were acquired by larger systems, they were 30 percent less likely to still offer labor and delivery services five years later. Many of the shuttered obstetric departments were the sole local source of obstetric care.

That loss translated to fewer resources – such as practicing OB-GYNs – in the county where the acquired hospital was located, researchers found.

The number of births in those counties didn’t change; families just had to go elsewhere for care.

Less access to nearby care could explain those counties’ small increases in health problems among women during or after pregnancy and child birth, and higher rates of smoking among pregnant women, researchers said.

On the flip side, they found that some patients went to higher-quality facilities farther away. And in rural hos-

“The hospital industry has undergone tremendous transformation over the past few decades, with nearly 1,600 mergers between 1998 and 2021.”

MARTIN GAYNOR
Co-author of the study and Emeritus Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon

pitals that didn’t close their obstetric departments following a merger, the quality of care tended to rise.

In recent years, officials in dozens of states have championed laws to increase oversight of mergers and other health care deal-making.

In the wake of devastating hospital closures tied to corporate financial maneuvering, some states have strengthened their antitrust laws.

Last year alone, 22 states enacted at least 34 laws related to health system consolidation and competition, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, an advisory think tank for lawmakers. Other states, meanwhile, have paved the way for health mergers in a bid to save failing rural hospitals.

At least 35 states now require hospitals, health systems, providers and private equity firms to notify a state official of proposed mergers or other contracts.

Earlier this month, California lawmakers passed a bill to expand the state’s authority in overseeing mergers and acquisitions in health care. It’s headed to Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom’s desk, though Newsom vetoed a similar measure last year.

At the federal level, President Donald Trump’s administration has not signaled an interest in increasing antitrust oversight. But Trump’s recent tax and spending law did include \$50 billion in funding over the next decade aimed at helping states strengthen rural health care. Massive cuts to Medicaid also in the law could have devastating impacts on rural hospitals struggling to stay afloat, however.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced that states have until Nov. 5 to apply for rural health funding. States must show that they’ll use the federal dollars in a way that aligns with certain CMS goals, including helping improve access to care and strengthening retention of health care workers.

Cass County residents to assess support for Habitat for Humanity chapter

By **MAXWELL HARDEN**
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — Cass County residents will hold a third meeting at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 24, at the Cass District Library Main Branch, 319 M-62, to assess support for re-starting a local Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, a faith-based volunteer housing authority.

The meeting is being coordinated by Jim Pedersen, Cassopolis Village Trustee and volunteer organizer.

“Cass County had a successful Chapter, but it had to suspend activity during the COVID pandemic, and it never came out of shutdown mode,” Pedersen said. “I’ve talked to many persons that are interested in resurrecting a Chapter, and I’ve booked a time and space to have a meeting, to simply gauge support and see if we can restart a Habitat for Humanity chapter

“Cass County had a successful Chapter, but it had to suspend activity during the COVID pandemic, and it never came out of shutdown mode. I’ve talked to many persons that are interested in resurrecting a Chapter, and I’ve booked a time and space to have a meeting, to simply gauge support and see if we can restart a Habitat for Humanity chapter here in Cass County.”

JIM PEDERSEN
Cassopolis Village Trustee and Volunteer Organizer

here in Cass County.” For more information on Habitat For Humanity, visit www.habitat.org.

Robert Snider

July 4, 1939 – September 13, 2025

Robert Alan Snider, 86, passed away on Saturday, September 13, 2025 in Niles, Michigan.

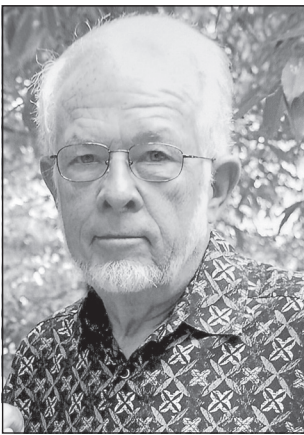
Bob was born on July 4, 1939 in St. Joseph, Michigan to the late Hollis Leroy Snider and Helen E. (Zech) Snider.

Along with his parents, Bob was preceded in death by his sons, Greg Snider and Gary Snider.

Left to cherish the memory of Bob is his loving wife of many years, Audrey (Hawblitzel) Snider; daughters, Carla (Jeff) Vedrenne and Carol (Steve) Hurt; 19 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren with two on the way, daughters-in-law, Jennifer Snider and Susan Snider, and brother, Richard (Kay) Snider.

Bob was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He cherished every moment spent with his family, taking great joy in the laughter and memories created with his grandchildren. A proud educator, Bob earned a Master’s Degree which he used to inspire those around him throughout his career.

Bob was a lifelong learner with a profound appreciation for history. He had a passion for collecting stamps and coins, finding joy in the sto-



ries they told and the history they represented. An avid car enthusiast, Robert enjoyed attending car shows, where he could admire vintage vehicles and connect with fellow car lovers.

Bob was loved by many and will be missed by all.

Memorial contributions in memory of Bob may be made out to Heartland Hospice, World Missionary Press, or Calvary Church South Bend.

In keeping with Bob’s wishes, there will be no services held at this time.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home.

Photos, condolences, and memories may be left for Bob’s family at www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

David Crespo Jr.

David John “Diggity” Crespo, Jr., 45, of Niles, died Wednesday, September 10, 2025.

His life began April 1, 1980 in Niles, Michigan the oldest of three children born to David Sr. and Tracy Crespo.

David John attended East Side Elementary and Ring Lardner, where he made many life long friends. He was a creative, kind soul. He had a passion for music; writing, playing, and singing with his guitar. He was an avid artist, particularly drawing and writing poetry. He was a great cook; cooking and baking from scratch. He was a huge fan of Kurt Cobain. David John loved riding motorcycles. He was a Chicago Bears fanatic. He enjoyed animals and had a soft spot for German Shepards. He and Juan enjoyed playing horseshoes and tubing down the creek as a pastime.

David John will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his father, David J. Crespo, Sr. of Niles; sister, Kateasha Crespo of Niles; brother, Dillon Crespo of Niles; grandfathers, Juan Crespo of Puerto Rico, Marty Liggett of Niles; aunts, Kelly (Wayne) Maxwell of Niles, Marci Katzenberger of South Bend, Indiana, Linda Warren of Niles; nieces and nephews, Dakota, Denny, Abbyrose, Aubriana, Annabelle, Ainsley;



cousins, Toni Marie, Cali, Wyatt; and best friend and cousin, Little Juan Crespo of Niles.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Tracy M. Crespo; grandmothers, Diane Liggett, Ludean Crespo; aunt, Carmen Gwusha; and uncle, Tony Crespo.

Family and friends will gather from 4:00 pm until time of service at 6:00 pm Thursday, September 18, 2025 in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles.

The family prefers contributions in memory of David be made to the family to help defray expenses, care of Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles, Michigan 49120.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

Norman Williams

March 23, 1948 – September 11, 2025

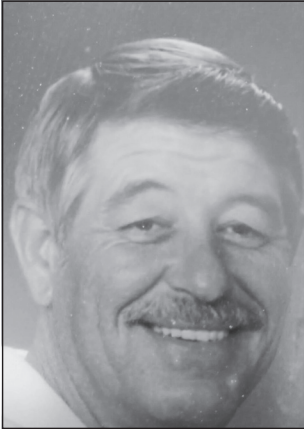
Norman “Steve” Williams, 77, passed following an illness surrounded by his family. Steve was an accomplished gardener, growing anything with ease, which led to a small successful business selling produce at a popular roadside stand. After many years in the transportation industry, Steve applied what he learned, creating his own business becoming an owner/operator aligning perfectly with his independent nature.

He was naturally mechanically inclined, allowing him to tackle skills that many take years to acquire and perfect. The natural talent allowed him to complete the design and build of his own porch and garage. A feat which he accomplished at the age of 73.

Steve never liked being idle and was always viewed as a hard worker with an exceptional work ethic that he instilled in his children. He loved music, especially 60’s Doo Wop, and often chose music over all other forms of entertainment.

He was an admired dancer often showcasing his talent while performing a twostep or waltz at a local night spot.

Family was very important to Steve; he was preceded in death by his parents, Norman E. Williams and Maxine (Miller) Williams, and all five siblings, Betty Garrison, Wayne Williams, Janet White, Joyce Squier, and Connie Pallo.



Left to cherish his memory is his devoted wife, Hazel (Heighway) Williams, or as he affectionately nicknamed her “Charlie”. Also left to mourn his passing are his four children, including his daughters, who he referred to as “his girls” Melissa Jessie, Crissy Lefor, and Shelly Hadden and his only son Michael “Todd” Williams.

Steve enjoyed and loved his 11 grandchildren, 14 great grandchildren, and 2 great-great grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date and anyone wishing to contribute to his memorial may do so in the name of the Alzheimer’s Association.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home.

Photos, condolences, and memories may be left for Norman’s family at www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Death notices

Bonnie Josephine Sandburg, 91, passed away on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, in Elkhart, Indiana. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

William Edward Tuttle Jr., 78, of Buchanan, Michigan, passed away on September 10, 2025. Services will be held at Brown Funeral Home on Thursday, September 18, at 1:00pm.

Donna O’Keefe, 88, of Dowagiac, passed away on Wednesday, September 10, 2025. Arrangements have been made with Bowerman Funeral Home in Eau Claire.

www.BowermanFuneral.com.

Maxine Pittman, 86, of Berrien Springs, passed away on September 10, 2025. Funeral October 4, 2025, at 4:30pm at Andrews University Seminary Chapel. Arrangements entrusted to Allred Funeral Home. www.AllredFuneralHome.com

Gordon “Rick” Ricky Sexton, 70, of Edwardsburg, Michigan, passed away on Saturday, September 13, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Niles, Michigan.

Namita Samadder

November 10, 1968 – September 16, 2025

Namita Samadder, 56, of Niles, a beacon of love and selflessness, passed away on September 16, 2025, following an unforeseen accident. Born on November 10, 1968, in the quaint town of Mehurpur, Bangladesh, Namita was a daughter to the late Gopal and Sutanggini (Mandel) Biswas. Her journey began amidst the vibrant culture of her native land, and she carried that rich heritage with her throughout her life.

Namita’s early years in Bangladesh were filled with the love and teachings of her devoted parents. She grew up alongside her siblings Polu Biswas, Lily Boiragi, Niyoti Biswas, Kishor Biswas, and Somita Roy, who now mourn her loss while celebrating her remarkable life. Namita’s heart found its counterpart in Dilip K. Samadder, whom she married on May 3, 1992, in a beautiful ceremony in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Their union was one of deep affection and mutual respect, and Dilip survives her, holding dear the memories they created together.

The couple was blessed with four sons, and though they faced the tragic loss of their son Akash Samadder, Namita’s love and strength continued to shine through her surviving sons, George (Alisa) Samadder, Alfred (Emma) Samadder, and Dickson Samadder. Her role as a mother was one she cherished above all, and she instilled in her children the values by which she lived: kindness, compassion, and faith.

Namita’s commitment to caring for others extended beyond her family. She pursued a career in nursing, a profession that allowed her to touch the lives of many with her healing hands and empathetic heart. Her dedication to her faith was evident in her active membership at the Dowagiac Seventh-day Adventist Church, where she not only practiced her beliefs but also formed a community with those who shared her devotion.



Her interests were a reflection of her nurturing spirit. Namita loved to cook, her kitchen always filled with the aromas of her latest creations. Gardening was another passion, with her hands often covered in soil as she tended to her flowers, which bloomed as brightly as her smile. Her faith was a constant source of comfort and guidance; she found joy in reading her Bible and participating in zoom Bible study meetings, teaching others about the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

Memorial contributions may be made in her memory to the Dowagiac Seventh-day Adventist Church 410 Hill Street, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047.

Funeral services to celebrate Namita’s life will be held on Sunday, September 21, 2025 at 4:00p.m. at the Dowagiac Seventh-day Adventist Church with a time of visitation beginning at 3:00p.m. Namita will be laid to rest near her son, Akash in Bangladesh.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Namita Samadder lived a life characterized by her faith-filled nature. She was a woman of immense love, always placing the needs of others before her own. Her selflessness was a lesson in humility, and the impact she made on those around her will continue to resonate. As we bid farewell to Namita, we do so with gratitude for the time we were privileged to share with her. Her legacy of love and devotion will forever be etched in the hearts of those who knew her.

Steven Robinson

April 25, 1982 – September 4, 2025

Steven James Robinson, 43, of Dowagiac, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, September 4, 2025 in the comfort of his own home.

His life began April 25, 1982 in Dowagiac, Michigan, the first of three children born to Steven and Deborah Williams. Steve loved watching ESPN faithfully every day and spending time with his nieces, nephew, and grands. Steve will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by survived by his long-time girlfriend, Jamie Whited; two daughters, Averiana Rohrer, Ke-



mery Richards; one son, Josh Richards; five grandchildren Zion, Bradley Jo, Zayden, Remi, and – coming soon – Princess.

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OPINION

THE CONVERSATION

Pneumonia vaccines for adults are now recommended starting at age 50 – a geriatrician explains the change

By LAURIE ARCHBALD-PANNONE
University of Virginia
(The Conversation)

Autumn brings a chill in the air – and the start of another season of respiratory illnesses, which can be especially hard for older adults. Although vaccine recommendations have been in flux, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendations on respiratory vaccines for older adults remain robust. As a geriatrician treating primarily patients age 65 and older, I’ve found that my patients are often unsure which of the various types of pneumonia vaccines is the best option for them. Until recently, the CDC recommended that everyone age 65 and older get a pneumonia vaccine. A year ago, in October 2024, the CDC lowered the recommended age from 65 to 50 due to a growing recognition that pneumonia can cause serious illness in people ages 50-65 – especially people who have other conditions that make them particularly vulnerable.

Pneumonia basics

Pneumonia most commonly occurs when a bacterium called Streptococcus pneumoniae infects the lungs. The infection can spur an outsize immune response and damage cells. The first vaccine for pneumonia was developed more than 100 years ago, at the request of the South African mining industry, which was losing a startling 5 percent to 10 percent of workers to the disease each year. For decades the most widely used pneumonia vaccine for adults was the so-called 23-valent vaccine, or PPSV23, which was approved in 1983 and protected against 23 strains of pneumococcal bacteria. In 2014, the PCV13 vaccine, which protected against 13 types of these bacteria, became the first pneumonia vaccine to be routinely recommended for adults age 65 and older. This vaccine was made using a newer technology that is thought to be more effective. Since then, three other pneumonia vaccines for adults, also made using the newer technology, have been licensed and added to the list of those recommended for older adults. The most recent of these is PCV21, which was approved in 2024 and specifically targets strains that usually affect adults rather than children. Which specific pneumonia vaccine you get will depend on your medical conditions and other health factors. Your health care provider will determine the most appropriate option, but you can learn more about pneumonia vaccines on the CDC’s

website and bring specific questions to your next health care visit.

Why did the guidelines change?

As the population of older adults rises, research suggests that without intervention, the number of people hospitalized with a pneumococcal pneumonia could nearly double by 2040. About 150,000 Americans are hospitalized with pneumococcal pneumonia each year. Although the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the independent body that advises the CDC on vaccines, had previously considered lowering the recommended age to receive the vaccine from 65 to 50, the approval of PCV21 provided a push. Because the rate of pneumococcal pneumonia was so high in this age group, they moved to adopt the recommendation. The pneumonia vaccine boosts the immune system’s ability to fight off this bacterium and lowers the likelihood of getting pneumonia – and of getting seriously ill, getting hospitalized, being put on a breathing machine or dying from a pneumonia infection. According to the CDC, the old vaccine, PPSV23, is 60 percent to 70 percent effective in preventing invasive pneumonia, the more serious version of the disease in which pneumococcal bacteria infect the major organs and the blood. Although this new, its mechanism and the strains it covers suggest it is even more effective, especially for people living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities.

Who should get the vaccine?

Older age is the clearest risk factor for getting sick from pneumonia. So, if you’re like me and you are planning for an upcoming 50th birthday – and have never gotten the pneumonia vaccine before – make sure to put “get the pneumonia vaccine” on your birthday list. If you’re an adult under 50 years old with a high risk condition, such as chronic liver disease or diabetes, the CDC also recommends you get vaccinated for pneumonia. And make sure to talk with your health care provider to see that you’re also up to date on all recommended vaccines, which could include shingles, flu, RSV and COVID-19. Laurie Archbald-Pannone is an Associate Professor of Medicine and Geriatrics at University of Virginia. The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts. This article is republished under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article at https://theconversation.com.

Trump administration is threatening liberal foundations and nonprofits after Kirk's death – but proving wrongdoing by any of them would be very hard

By BETH GAZLEY
Indiana University
(The Conversation)

Following the Sept. 10, 2025, death of conservative activist Charlie Kirk in Utah, the Trump administration signaled that it intends to expand investigations into “leftist groups” for possible links to the suspect. Kirk, who was 31 when he died, founded and led Turning Point USA, a conservative nonprofit that counted hundreds of thousands of young Americans among its members. Tyler Robinson, a 22-year-old Utah man, is accused of killing Kirk with a single bullet at a crowded outdoor debate. He was, according to many accounts, raised by Republican parents in a conservative community. Although Robinson reportedly had recently adopted different political views, his precise motives remain unclear. The Conversation U.S. asked Beth Gazley, an Indiana University scholar of nonprofits, local governance and civil society, to explain the significance of the Trump administration’s response to Kirk’s death in terms of free speech and nonprofit norms.

What are the Trump administration's allegations?

High-ranking members of the Trump administration, including Vice President JD Vance and Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, are accusing certain progressive organizations of encouraging violence against right-wing public figures and suggesting they played a role in Kirk’s death. Miller, for example, has likened those groups to “a vast domestic terror movement.” Vance has said the government will “go after the NGO network that foment, facilitates and engages in violence,” in a reference to nonprofits he alleges are supporting illegal activities. President Donald Trump has blamed Kirk’s death on “a radical left group of lunatics” that doesn’t “play fair.” He has stated that they are “already under major investigation,” although no such probe has been disclosed to date. Trump has raised the possibility of criminal charges under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as the RICO statute, which is typically used to prosecute gangs and organized crime rings. But, to be clear, the Trump administration has not yet produced evidence to support any of its allegations of wrongdoing by nonprofits and their funders.

What organizations are being targeted?

Some conservative media outlets and Trump administration members have singled

out specific nonprofits and funders. Their targets include billionaire George Soros, whose Open Society Foundations are among the country’s largest philanthropies, and the Ford Foundation, another of the nation’s top grantmakers. The outlets and officials claim that both foundations allegedly provided money to as-of-yet unnamed groups that “radicalized” Tyler Robinson and led to what the White House has called “organized agitation.” Another target is the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization that regularly reported comments Kirk made disparaging Black, LGBTQ and other people. The Ford Foundation is among more than 100 funders that signed onto an open letter posted to the Medium platform on Sept. 17, in which they objected to these Trump administration’s attacks. Open Society Foundations also signed the letter, and, in a post on the X platform, it denied the specific allegations directed at it by the Trump administration. The Southern Poverty Law Center has posted its own denial on Facebook.

Most but not all of the organizations Trump and his officials have accused of wrongdoing are charitable nonprofits and foundations. These organizations operate in accordance with the rules spelled out in Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. tax code. What can count as a charitable activity is defined very broadly due to the language that Congress approved over a century ago. It includes public policy advocacy, a limited amount of direct lobbying, social services and a broad range of other activities that include running nonprofit hospitals, theaters and universities. Churches and other houses of worship count as U.S. charities too. The rights of nonprofits are also protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which entitles them to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and the right to assemble and “petition the government for a redress of grievances” – which cements their right to participate in public policy advocacy. Obviously, institutions – including nonprofits – and the people who lead them can’t promote criminal activity or incite political violence without breaking the law. U.S. Supreme Court precedents have set the bar very high on what counts as an incitement to violence.

Are there any precedents for this?

The Republican Party has previously attempted, and failed, several times in the past few years to expand the executive branch’s power to deregister charities for partisan purposes.

Most recently, GOP House members drafted an amendment that was cut from the final version of the big tax-and-spending bill Trump signed on July 4. But many nonprofit advocates remain concerned about the possibility of the Trump administration using other means to limit nonprofit political rights.

Are there precedents for the repression of U.S. nonprofits and their funders?

Under the Bill of Rights, the U.S. has strong protections in place that shield nonprofits from partisan attacks. Still, there are some precedents for attempts to repress them. The Johnson Amendment to a tax bill passed in 1954 is a well-known example. This law ended the ability of 501(c)(3) charities, private foundations and religious organizations to interfere in political campaigns.

Despite strong support from the public and the nonprofit sector for keeping it in place, the Trump administration has attempted to repeal the Johnson Amendment. What is largely forgotten is that Lyndon B. Johnson, then a member of Congress, introduced the measure to silence two conservative charities in his Texas district that supported his political opponent. The Republican Party has also claimed in recent years that conservatives have been victims of efforts to suppress their freedom to establish and operate charitable nonprofits. A notable case was the GOP’s accusation during the Obama administration that the Internal Revenue Service was unfairly targeting Tea Party groups for extra scrutiny. Following years of outrage over that alleged partisanship, however, it later turned out that the IRS had applied extra scrutiny to progressive groups as well. Some political observers have suggested that the Trump administration’s inspiration for targeting certain nonprofits and their funders comes from what’s going on in other countries. Hungary, Russia, Turkey and other countries have punished the activities of their political opponents and nongovernmental organizations as crimes.

What do you think could ultimately be at stake?

The economic and political freedoms that are the bedrock of a true democracy rely on a diversity of ideas. The mechanism for implementing that ideal in the U.S. relies heavily on a long-standing Supreme Court doctrine that extends constitutional rights to individ-

uals and organizations alike. Nonprofits, in other words, have constitutional rights. What this means for American society is a much greater proliferation of nonprofit activity than you see in many other countries, with the inevitable result that many organizations espouse unpopular opinions or views that clash with public opinion or the goals of a major political party. That situation does not make their activities illegal. Even Americans who disagree with the missions of Turning Point USA or the Southern Poverty Law Center should be able to agree that both institutions contribute to what Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas once called the “market place of ideas” necessary for an open democracy.

Is it easy to see what donors fund and what nonprofits do with their money?

This situation leaves open the question of whether the public has a right to know who is bankrolling a nonprofit’s activity. Following the money can be frustrating. Federal law is somewhat contradictory in how far it will go to apply democratic ideals of openness and transparency to nonprofit activity. A key example is the long-standing protection of donor privacy in U.S. law, a principle that conservatives generally favor. The courts have established that making a charitable gift is a protected free speech activity that entitles donors to certain privacy rights. In fact, the most recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling related to charitable giving, handed down in 2021, upheld a conservative nonprofit’s right to strip donors’ names from reporting documents. This privacy right extends to foundations: They can decide whether to disclose the names of their grant recipients. Still, all nonprofits except churches need to make some disclosures regarding their finances on a mandatory form filed annually. Looking forward, organizations that advocate for the charitable sector as a whole, such as the National Council of Nonprofits, are closely following the efforts of the Trump administration. Their role is to remind the public that nonprofits on both the right and left side of the political spectrum have strong advocacy rights that don’t disappear when bad things happen. Beth Gazley is a Professor of Nonprofit Management and Policy at Indiana University.

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St. Joseph man gets prison time for drunk driving

By DEBRA HAIGHT
For Leader Publications

NILES — A St. Joseph man convicted of drunk driving was sentenced to prison Monday in Berrien County Trial Court at the Niles courthouse.

Daniel Allen Kidd, 31, of St. Joseph, pleaded guilty to third offense drunk driving and was sentenced to 18 months to five years in prison. He has credit for 73 days served and must pay \$1,543 in fines and costs. His license was revoked. He was also given credit for time served for attempted resisting and obstructing police.

The incident occurred July 4 in Weesaw Township. Police were called to the scene on reports of a fight and found Kidd doing donuts in a field. His blood alcohol level was .239, nearly three times the legal limit.

Assistant Prosecutor Myrene Koch noted both the fact that Kidd had five prior drunk driving convictions and his high blood alcohol level. “He put himself and the public at risk,” she said. “He has had numerous opportunities on probation.”

“I’m very sorry to my community,” Kidd said. “I was going through a divorce and I started drinking. It was my own fault. I had a good job and a good family. “I want to prove myself when I get out.”

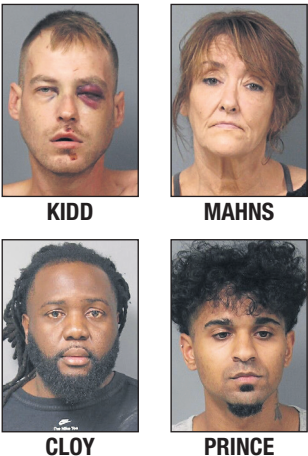
“I don’t know that anyone minds if you drink alcohol at home,” Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon Hosbein said. “But then you got in a car and put the community in danger. Actions have consequences and you have taken some responsibility.”

A Cassopolis woman was given probation and jail for also driving drunk.

Leah Ann Mahns, 51, of Cassopolis, pleaded guilty to third offense drunk driving and was sentenced to two years probation, 210 days in jail with credit for 25 days served, four months tether after she gets out, 480 hours of community service and \$1,992.16 in fines and costs.

She also pleaded guilty to contempt of court by violating her bond conditions by testing positive for alcohol on Sept. 4 and 5 and was sentenced to credit for 25 days served.

The incident occurred July 9 in Niles. Her blood alcohol level was found to be .18, over twice the legal limit. She was stopped and arrested after observed to be acting erratically including not accelerating at a stoplight when the light turned green.



While defense attorney Stephanie Teeple called the case a “conundrum” as she said Mahns doesn’t remember the incident, Judge Hosbein disagreed. He noted that Mahns could have been going to prison if her guidelines had been higher.

Mahns apologized for her actions and asked that she be able to start her jail sentence later so she can care for her fiancé who is having surgery this week. Judge Hosbein denied that request, noting that she had driven drunk in early September even when she knew she wasn’t supposed to.

The judge pointed out that while he understands people use alcohol to cope, he doesn’t understand why they then get in a car and drive drunk which puts themselves and others in danger.

In two other sentencing, two area residents were sentenced for attempted carjacking and fleeing police.

Tyrus Dontral Cloy, 31, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to attempted carjacking and was sentenced to 60 days in jail with credit for two days served and \$258 in fines and costs. The rest of the jail term is held in abeyance pending Cloy’s completion of a mental health assessment.

The incident occurred July 14 south of Buchanan. Cloy bailed out of a friend’s car and fled on foot. He then tried to steal a car at JD’s Truck Stop on U.S. 12.

Defense attorney Shayne Williams said Cloy has a good job and had a mental health breakdown at the time of this incident.

Samuel Lawrence Prince, 23, of Stevensville, pleaded guilty to fleeing and eluding police and resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to 210 days in jail with credit for 95 days served and \$266 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred June 13 in Buchanan Township where he was pulled over after speeding and crossing the center line.

The jail term can be served in any penal institution as he also faces charges in Van Buren County.

Cass County celebrates completion of broadband infrastructure construction

SUBMITTED

CASS COUNTY — Nearly 600 Cass County households now have access to high-speed internet for the first time, thanks to a collaborative effort between Cass County, Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC), and the state of Michigan.

MEC is wrapping up its efforts with the ROBIN (Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks) program, a joint effort focused on providing high-speed internet to unserved areas.

In 2023, the Cass County Board of Commissioners allocated \$250,000 to match a grant awarded to MEC by the state’s ROBIN program, funded by the U.S. Treasury’s Capital Projects Fund. Combined, these funds allowed MEC to provide reliable broadband service to 578 homes across every corner of Cass County.

“Expanding broadband access has been one of Cass County’s highest pri-

“Expanding broadband access has been one of Cass County’s highest priorities because it directly impacts education, healthcare, business growth, and quality of life. This project ensures that families and businesses in even our most rural townships are no longer left behind.”

JENNIFER RENTFROW
Interim Cass County Administrator

orities because it directly impacts education, healthcare, business growth, and quality of life,” said Jennifer Rentfrow, Interim Cass County Administrator. “This project ensures that families and businesses in even our most rural townships are no longer left behind.”

The broadband expansion was informed by the work of Cass County, which studied service gaps and identified solutions to address rural needs. Cass County’s economic development partner, Market One, received a grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to conduct a regional broadband needs assessment. Partnering with DCS

Technology Design, the team produced a county-wide, parcel-level map of internet availability. With that data in hand, MEC launched construction to reach households previously excluded from high-speed service.

“This partnership shows the power of collaboration between local government, economic development, and private providers,” said Zach Morris, Executive Director of Market One. “By combining resources and expertise, we’ve been able to deliver lasting infrastructure that supports Cass County’s future.”

With construction complete, MEC’s focus is now on installation in the nine participating townships: Howard, LaGrange, Mar-

cellus, Mason, Pokagon, Porter, Silver Creek, Volinia and Wayne.

“MEC is committed to ensuring unserved and underserved rural residents have access to reliable, high-speed internet. Our ROBIN funding would not have been possible without the dedication and partnership of Cass County and LaGrange, Marcellus, Mason and Pokagon Townships,” said Terry Rubenthaler, MEC president/CEO. “They worked tirelessly to secure financial commitments to help make high-speed broadband a reality in their areas. We’re proud to work with individuals who share our vision of creating vibrant, relevant, and sustainable rural communities.”

Berrien Community Foundation announces emergency book fund for LMC students

FOR LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BENTON HARBOR — Students at Lake Michigan College facing severe financial hardship and having difficulty purchasing books for classes have received a major boost with a contribution from the Berrien Community Foundation.

The Berrien Community Foundation is making a \$50,000 contribution to create an emergency book fund

for the 2025-26 school year. “With the help of generous donors who are dedicated to removing barriers to student success, we are able to work with Lake Michigan College to help financially struggling students with books and materials they need,” said Berrien Community Foundation President Lisa Cripps-Downey. “At BCF we are always looking for ways to help our community. Partnering with LMC

to prepare our residents for success in the workforce is a wonderful way to help.”

“Research shows that students who have materials early on in their academic journey have higher completion rates and do better in class,” stated Lake Michigan College Vice President of Community Impact Doug Schaffer. “We appreciate the efforts of the Berrien Community Foundation for this gift and their support of

LMC students through the years. We are fortunate to live in an area that supports the important work this Foundation does every day,” Schaffer added.

LMC students wishing to take advantage of the emergency book fund can apply online at lakemichigancollege.edu/mylmc/student-affairs/ssf. Students can also e-mail Susan Eastman at seastman@lakemichigancollege.edu with questions.

Halloween improv shows at Tin Shop Theatre

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BUCHANAN — The Improv Mill is bringing two nights of Halloween-themed improvised comedy to the Tin Shop Theatre, 108 E. Roe St., on Oct. 24 and 25.

Each night will feature two shows. The first, “Hal-

loween Torture Show,” begins at 7:30 p.m. and will run for approximately 90 minutes. The shows, which are unrated and may contain adult content, will feature improvisors being challenged with obstacles such as performing scenes while keeping balloons afloat and navigating a stage with mousetraps.

A late show will be held each night at 9:30 p.m., featuring local groups Small Victories from Southwest Michigan and I.S.T.G. from South Bend. The evening will conclude with Improv D&D, an improvised tale based on the tabletop role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons. These shows will run for approximately

75 minutes. Admission is \$15 per show. Those who attend the 7:30 p.m. performance can stay for the 9:30 p.m. show for an additional \$5, space permitting. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit tinshoptheatre.org or theimprovmill.com, or call the Tin Shop Theatre box office at (269) 695-6464.

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Fine Arts Boosters to host second annual Trivia Night

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Dowagiac Fine Arts Boosters will host their second annual Trivia Night Saturday, Oct. 11, at the Dowagiac VFW, 472 E. Division St. The event, which is for

ages 21 and up, will have doors open at 6 p.m., with trivia beginning at 7 p.m. The night will also feature a 50/50 raffle, cash prizes, and a silent auction.

Registration is \$100 per table, with a maximum of 10 people per table, or \$10 per person. Readers can register

by calling (269) 782-9208 or email hschuur@dowagiacschools.org.

All proceeds from the event will support the Dowagiac Fine Arts Boosters, which funds and provides scholarships for K-12 art, music and theater within the Dowagiac Union Schools district.

MUSEUM

From page A1

As part of its involvement, the Foundation has granted the Museum \$8,000 to develop a new strategic plan of its own, which it will assist in creating and executing.

The Lyons family also created Downtown Dowagiac's Heddon Museum, which preserves the history of the Heddon family's contributions to the fishing tackle industry. In recent years, the Lyons family donated its vast collection of Heddon lures, rods and more to the Dowagiac Area History Museum, which now operates the Heddon Museum.

A new governance structure for the Museum has been developed to ensure strong long term management and fiduciary oversight. Paired with the Museum's fundraising arm, the Friends of the Dowagiac Area History Museum, this new 501c3 entity will develop policies and plans to ensure the Museum's long-term success.

The Lyons family and Lyons Industries will fund a renovation to the museum's exhibits. The Museum's first floor will be reconfigured to better highlight the Round Oak Stove Company. The company brought the Industrial Revolution to Dowagiac in the 1870s, and its stoves are highly sought-after col-

"Keeping history alive requires more than meticulously cataloging artifacts and planning exhibits and programming. It also requires strong long-term planning and constantly looking for opportunities to keep our content fresh. We thank everyone who's been involved in supporting our efforts, and we encourage the community to contribute in whatever way makes sense for them."

STEVE ARSENEAU
Museum Director

lectibles. Arseneau hopes to complete the renovation by late 2026 or early 2027.

Steve Arseneau, the museum director, and Lyons went on to thank the crowd for its support of the museum and noted that there are ways for all types of people to get involved with its success, including planned giving and volunteering.

"Keeping history alive requires more than metic-

ulously cataloging artifacts and planning exhibits and programming," Arseneau said. "It also requires strong long-term planning and constantly looking for opportunities to keep our content fresh. We thank everyone who's been involved in supporting our efforts, and we encourage the community to contribute in whatever way makes sense for them."

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ST. JOHN'S

From page A1

So, this year St. John's Lutheran Church had to make a very difficult decision. We cannot afford to keep it open, so we needed to close the doors of our Preschool/Day Care. As Dr. Burling states, "The sad thing is that this was purely a 'financial decision,' based only on the hard facts that we could no longer afford to run this ministry of ours. As Christians, we hate to make any decision based only on money, because we are always assured that our God works miracles all the time, and can give us the money we need to do what we want to do. And yet, we had to face the harsh realities of life, and realize that as far as we human beings can look into the future, we need to

make this decision."

However, one bright spot came out of this decision. Even though St. John's Lutheran Preschool and Day Care will close its doors for the last time on September 12, another group has asked for permission to use our facility to continue the work that we started. Flowers Early Learning will open its doors toward the end of September or the beginning of October. Even though Flowers Early Learning concentrates on the Preschool aspect, getting the children of our area prepared to go to school, they have a desire to get into the Day Care aspect as well, offering parents of our area a place where their children can be safe, while parents need to work. They also promised to use as much of the present Staff who want to stay, and

are willing to go through the training they may need to go through. They also agreed to speak with all the parents who are presently using our facility to see if they can also qualify to use the new facilities.

"The solution is bitter-sweet," Burling said. "Although we need to close a part of St. John's ministry that has been part of our life for 43 years, we did not have to close the doors completely. There is another group who will take up reigns and will offer the people of our community what we have been offering all this time. So, even though our eyes are filled with tears as we need to say 'Goodbye' to our Preschool and Day Care, we can rejoice that someone else will use our facility to offer the same services to the people of our community."

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Sports

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Niles tennis falls to Three Rivers

By SCOTT HASSINGER
For Leader Publications

THREE RIVERS — Despite losing the final two flights of the match, Niles assistant varsity boys’ tennis coach Matt Herm was proud of the fight the Vikings showed in a 5-3 Wolverine Conference loss at Three Rivers on Monday.

The match score was tied 3-3 when the No. 2 and No. 3 doubles matches both went into a third set.

Both schools had a great deal to celebrate in those matches as the deciding sets provided many exciting and closely-contested points.

At No. 2 doubles, Niles’ duo of Matthew Richards

and Shawn Atkins dropped a heartbreaking 4-6, 7-5, 6-7 (5-7) decision to Three Rivers’ tandem of Frederico De Godoy and Collin McIntyre giving the hosts the league triumph.

The Wildcats’ Brady Stratton and Henry Bobell pulled out a 2-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-1 victory over Niles’ Carson Pugh and Jacob Kujawa at No. 3 doubles.

“We’re just really excited to see our kids keep growing as the season progresses. Sometimes its good to get into those special kinds of situations. You can learn alot from a loss too. I was just pleased to see our team rally and there was a great deal of cheering. It was frustrating

to come up short, but we’re young and we are just going to keep getting better,” said Herm, who was filling in for head coach Jill Weber on Monday.

The Vikings’ lineup in the match featured four freshmen.

Niles earned victories at No. 1 and No. 4 doubles and its other win came at Np. 2 singles.

Joshua Becraft and Logan Paluzzi from Niles earned a 6-4, 6-4 win at No. 1 doubles over Parker Bingaman and Todd Wadsworth from Three Rivers.

The Vikings’ No. 4 duo of Gavin Dandurand and Eli



Scott Hassinger / Leader Publications Contributor
Abram Knight from Niles returns a shot with his backhand in his No. 3 singles match against Three Rivers on Monday.

See TENNIS, page B2

Rapid response at home



Tanya Hagen / Leader Publications Contributor

The Dowagiac football team earned a 69-12 victory over Benton Harbor Friday, Sept. 12 in its home opener.

Dowagiac beats Benton Harbor 69-12 in home opener

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Dowagiac head coach Duane Davis said his team talked in great detail about needing to respond this week against Benton Harbor after its disappointing loss to Three Rivers last week. The Chieftains responded to the tune of a 69-12 victory over the Tigers Friday, Sept. 12 in their home opener.

“Last week, we were terrible coming out in the first half,” Davis said. “We were slow, we were lazy, but the kids took it to heart. We were

watching on film so tonight, they knew we had to come out and be fast and physical right off the bat and they did. They took the challenge and ran with it, so I’m proud of them for that.”

The Chieftains led 35-0 after one quarter and 56-6 at halftime. Skyler Vincek tossed two touchdown passes – to Cooper Szymczak (8 yards) and Caiden Freeman (18 yards) respectively – and had one 13-yard rushing touchdown. Hill (18 yards and 8 yards), Marcus Waares (20 yards), Tim Masterman (18 yards), Devin Rock (18 yards), Isaiah Weather-

spoon (four yards) tallied rushing touchdowns and Devin Maddron turned defense into offense with a 42-yard interception return for a touchdown.

The 69 points scored by Dowagiac were the most for a Chieftains team since 1999, a 70-0 victory over the now-closed South Bend LaSalle. Kicker Johannah McDonald converted 9 of 10 extra points in Friday’s win, the most by a Chieftains player in one game since the win over South Bend LaSalle 26 years ago.

Byron Broyles found the end zone

on a 3-yard run for the Tigers. In the second half, quarterback Damonee McBride connected with Messiah Lacy on a 30-yard touchdown strike. While the Tigers had the ability to move the ball, inexperience in the form of penalties and missed assignments often ended drives before they could begin.

“It’s just tough with the inexperience that we have, the execution on stuff,” said Benton Harbor coach Dan McGinnis. “The gap in football knowledge is what really is hurting

See FOOTBALL, page B2

Paw Paw sweeps past Dowagiac volleyball

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Dowagiac volleyball team was swept in three sets by Paw Paw on Wednesday with scores of 17-25, 22-25, and 23-25.

“Our girls played hard but our unforced errors are what kept us from being successful,” said Dowagiac Head Coach Amber Todd. “We are pushing to cut back on unforced errors and working to maintain consistency throughout each set.”

Marlie Carpenter led the team in kills with seven, followed by Riley Todd with five and Tessa Deering and Brianna Campbell who each had four. On defense, Carpenter had a team-high 14 digs. Zabrina Shivers had seven digs, while Claire Hess had six, and Tatiyana Lara and Hannah McCuddy each had three.

McCuddy was the assists leader with 14 and Hess added 11 assists. At the net, Niya Moss had a team-high three blocks and Deering and Carpenter each had two. Carpenter also led the team in aces with two.

Todd said that Dowagiac had a better hitting percentage (0.028 vs Paw Paw’s 0.009), a better serve receive rating (1.72-1.68) and more assists (25-22).

“Our serving was inconsistent and what ultimately led to this loss,” Todd said.

Dowagiac (7-13-2) faces Brandywine at 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

Buchanan High School unveils new competition gym floor

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BUCHANAN — Buchanan High School has announced the completion of its competition gymnasium floor restoration project, marking a significant milestone in the school’s commitment to providing quality athletic facilities for its student-athletes and community.

This past spring, the competition gym floor sustained significant water damage during the intense storms that swept through the area. The severe weather conditions resulted in flooding that compromised the integrity of the original flooring, necessitating a complete restoration effort.

District administration worked diligently with insurance representatives and professional contractors throughout the summer months to ensure a comprehensive repair and restoration process. The project was made possible through a combination of insurance coverage and additional funding from the district’s building site fund, demonstrating the school’s commitment to maintaining premier athletic facilities.

The fully restored floor showcases several improvements over the previous surface:

Modern Matte Finish: The new surface features a contemporary matte look that reduces glare and provides optimal playing conditions

Cleaner Design Elements: Updated court markings and graphics create a more professional appearance

Enhanced Durability: The restoration incorporates modern materials and techniques designed to withstand heavy use and environmental factors

Safety Improvements: The new surface meets or exceeds current safety standards for high school competition

The volleyball team has already begun practicing on the newly restored floor, with coaches and players expressing enthusiasm about the improved playing surface. The gym is now fully operational and ready to host competitions, providing an exceptional venue for both



Photo provided

Buchanan High School announced the completion of its competition gymnasium floor restoration project.

Buchanan football falls 23-20 to Battle Creek Pennfield

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BUCHANAN — The Buchanan football team suffered its first loss of the season to Battle Creek Pennfield 23-20 Friday, Sept. 12. Buchanan's offense out-gained Pennfield 381-221 in total yards. However, the Bucks also had four turnovers in the game, three of which were interceptions. Buchanan (2-1) scored the first touchdown of the game on a 2-yard Max Cornelius run in the first quarter but failed the two-point conversion. Pennfield answered with an 81-yard touchdown run and a safety, taking a 9-6 lead by the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, Pennfield extended its lead with a 52-yard touchdown run and a 7-yard touchdown run, bringing the score to 23-6. Cornelius scored two more touchdowns for the Bucks, a

4-yard run and a 2-yard run, to make it 18-23 at the end of the second quarter. Buchanan scored a safety in the fourth quarter but it was not enough. Cornelius led the rushing attack for Buchanan with 86 yards on 25 carries and three touchdowns. He also had two receptions for 13 yards. Carson Deming had 65 rushing yards on five carries and two receptions for 49 yards. Lucas Zeiger totaled 61 yards on five carries and completed two passes for 49 yards. Cy Carlin completed 6 of 10 passes for 88 yards and one interception. Brody Reed was the leading receiver for the Bucks with five receptions for 66 yards. On defense, Owen Thompson, Elijah McLeod, Logan Edgerle, RJ Scoggin, and Isaiah Nelson each had seven tackles. Thompson and Edgerle also had fumble recoveries.

FOOTBALL

From page B1

us. You see we can move the ball but we're just gonna make mistakes, not be in the right technique, not reading." McGinnis said that several of his starters on defense are playing football for the first time. "We're getting new guys to come in. We've got more numbers than we had before," he said. "We've got a lot of guys. We just need football IQ and acumen to be able to be precise, so we'll get it. You've only got six more games left. I like how my guys keep battling — we don't give up. It was disappointing, but we didn't give up, so I'm proud of that." Dowagiac owned the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball and sophomore Khalif Reyna was a key reason why. The 6-2, 295-pound sophomore open holes for the offense and was a constant presence in the backfield on defense. "He is a difference maker," Davis said. "Not very many people are 6-2, 310 pounds and move the way he does, so we're lucky to have him.

FLOOR

From page B1

competitions, providing an exceptional venue for both home games and community events. "We're thrilled to welcome our teams, students, and community back to our restored competition gymnasium," said Reid McBeth. "This project represents our

ongoing dedication to providing our student-athletes with facilities that support their growth and achievement." The restored gymnasium will serve not only the volleyball program but all athletic teams and school activities that utilize the space, ensuring that Buchanan High School continues to offer quality facilities for years to come.

TENNIS

From page B1

Chism topped Derek and Drew Perez from Three Rivers 6-3, 6-0. Niles' other win was produced by Colin Brown at No. 2 singles 6-1, 6-0 over Three Rivers' Keagan Boring. At No. 1 singles, Stephen Applewhite from Niles was defeated by Three Rivers' Alex Nowak 1-6, 2-6. Niles' No. 3 singles player Abram Knight lost to Three Rivers' Ebin Perkins 4-6, 3-6. Ryker Leaverton from Niles lost at No. 4 singles to Carter Fuller of Three Rivers 4-6, 4-6. Three Rivers head coach Mike Kupiec was pleased with the grit his Wildcats showed in coming away with the win. "This was a great tennis match today that could've went either way. We were fortunate to end up with a win. We let a lot of points slip away in some of our matches, but I'm proud of our No. 2 and No. 3 doubles teams for pulling out their matches in three sets. We are a fairly young team but its been fun watching these kids

grow each day," Kupiec said.

Vicksburg 6, Niles 2

The Niles boys tennis team fell to Vicksburg 6-2 on Wednesday. In singles play, Vicksburg's Maddox Rosalin defeated Stephen Applewhite at No. 1 singles (6-1, 6-1), and Wes Post defeated Collin Brown at No. 2 (6-0, 6-1). Abe Knight secured a win for Niles at No. 3 singles, defeating Calvin Triemstra in a three-set match (7-6 (5), 4-6, 6-3). Vicksburg's Landon Enderich won at No. 4 singles against Ryker Leaverton (6-1, 6-0). In doubles, Niles' No. 2 team of Matthew Richards and Shawn Atkins defeated Vicksburg's Jasper Kling and Griffin Schiedel in three sets (6-3, 3-6, 6-2). Vicksburg took the rest of the doubles matches. The No. 1 team of Mason Rose and Liam Herson won against Logan Paluzzi and Joshua Becraft (6-2, 2-6, 6-1). At No. 3 doubles, Caleb Robbins and Ryan Smith defeated Carson Pugh and Sam Lundberg (6-1, 7-5). Drake Reitenour and Spencer Sertic secured the win at No. 4 doubles against Gavin Dandurand and Eli Chism (6-0, 6-1).



Tanya Hagen / Leader Publications Contributor

The Brandywine boys tennis team defeated rival Buchanan 5-3 Thursday in a dual meet.

Brandywine boys tennis edges Buchanan 5-3

BUCHANAN — The Brandywine boys tennis team defeated rival Buchanan 5-3 in a dual meet. Marley Hinds and Jaret Seddon secured wins for Buchanan at No. 2 and No. 3 singles, respectively. Hinds defeated Blake Magyar 6-2, 6-2. Seddon won in a tough three-set match against Kyler Marshall, 1-6, 6-2, 10-7. Brandywine's wins came at No. 1 and No. 4 singles. Ryder Richard defeated Dean Wegner 6-0, 6-0. Malachi Gamble also won his match 6-0, 6-0 against Reese Tumbleson. In doubles play, Brandywine won three out of four. The No. 1 team of Maddox Carpenter and Brady Bosch defeated Garrett Senger and William Sherwood 6-0, 6-0. At No. 2 doubles, Hudson Aalfs and Bryce Hood defeated Chase Mitchell and Holden Carrington 6-0, 6-2. The No. 3 doubles team of Nolan Shaffer and Jordan Bryant secured a win against Keegan McBeth and Cody Strauss, 6-1, 6-3. Buchanan's No. 4 team of Joseph Bosse and Trenton Higgs defeated Lincoln Babcock and Cam Marazita 6-4, 6-0.



Tanya Hagen / Leader Publications Contributor

Marley Hines makes a play on the ball Thursday at home.

The win brings the Bobcats' season record to 7-3 overall and 4-2 in the Lakeland Conference.



Photo provided

The Southwestern Michigan College volleyball team defeated Marian Ancilla College 3-1 on Tuesday in their opening conference match.

SMC volleyball defeats Marian Ancilla

COURTESY OF
SMC ATHLETICS

PLYMOUTH, Ind. — The Southwestern Michigan College volleyball team defeated Marian Ancilla College 3-1 on Tuesday in their opening conference match. The Roadrunners won with set scores of 25-13, 21-25, 25-18, and 25-18. "We knew tonight was going to be a change of pace compared to the faster teams we have been

playing," said Head Coach Jenny Nate. "Ancilla has some big blockers and solid attackers, but they run a slower offense which we knew was going to be an adjustment. I also think we were just a little tense as it was our first conference road match." The victory brings SMC's overall record to 9-3 and their conference record to 1-0. Amie Schutz led the team with 21 kills and added 11

digs. Meah Evans paced the offense with 28 assists while also recording 7 points and 6 kills. Lily Kowalik had a strong performance with 12 kills and two blocks. On defense, Carlie Ritchie led all players with 19 digs. Maggie Arney had a team-high four blocks, and Ryli Burks contributed eight kills and two blocks. At the service line, Kadence Bixby led with 12 points and three aces.

Niles volleyball edges Paw Paw in five sets

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

PAW PAW — The Niles volleyball team defeated Paw Paw in a five-set thriller Thursday, Sept. 11.

The Vikings won the match with set scores of 25-13, 22-25, 21-25, 25-20, and 15-7. Nariyah Jones led the team with 11 kills, while Neriah Stevens contributed

10. Mena Hover was the assist leader with 40 and also had a team-high 21 digs. Maddie Zache led the defense with 22 digs. Leala Wirick was the team's top server with 5 aces.

Edwardsburg volleyball sixth at Caledonia Tournament

CALEDONIA — The Edwardsburg varsity girls' volleyball team sharpened its skills Sept. 13 by participating in the prestigious Caledonia Tournament where the Lady Eddies placed sixth out of 10 schools. Edwardsburg lost to Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central 24-26, 25-15, 14-16; fell to Grand Rapids Forest Hills; lost to Byron Center 17-25, 22-25; beat Traverse City St. Francis 25-20, 25-20 and fell to Mattawan 25-18, 18-25, 13-15. Sarah Pippin had 39 kills, 18 digs, one block, five aces and four assists for Edwardsburg. Ella Laskowski produced 24 kills, 14 digs, three blocks and one ace. Rylie Rosenkrantz added six kills, 24 digs, a pair of blocks, one ace and 84 assists. Mya Eberlein finished with 20 kills, 12 blocks, eight digs and seven aces. Shelby Laubach pitched in with 10 kills and two blocks. Courtney Zache had 12 kills, 17 digs, one block and seven aces. Sophia Kuntz had 34 digs, four aces and six assists for the Lady Eddies, now 12-6.

Edwardsburg, Buchanan soccer teams secure wins

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg boys soccer team defeated Paw Paw 3-0 on Friday, improving their overall record to 7-1-0 and their conference record to 2-0-0.

Austin Leak scored two goals for the Eddies, both assisted by Aleck Rodriguez. Rodriguez also scored an unassisted goal.

Buchanan cruises past Dowagiac

The Buchanan soccer team defeated Dowagiac with a final score of 9-1. Easton May led the Bucks with three goals, while Brayden Ramey, Nico Sanchez, Preston Payne, and Luis Novis each contributed one goal. The win brings Buchanan's record to 7-4-2, while Dowagiac's record is now 0-3-0.

Niles beats Paw Paw football conference opener

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

PAW PAW — The Niles football team remains among the undefeated. The Vikings ground out a 30-14 road win over Paw Paw in the Wolverine Conference opener. Niles led 8-6 at halftime. The Red Wolves outgained the Vikings 281-244 in total yards and Niles edged Paw Paw 244-237 in rushing yards. Leading the way for Niles was Alex Anderson, who tallied seven carries for 138 yards and two touchdowns — a 69-yard run and a 37-yard run. He also added a 90-yard kickoff return touchdown. Brandon Walsh also scored a touchdown on a 3-yard run. On the defensive side, senior Brenden Olsen finished with nine total tackles and 3 interceptions and Bryce Zache had seven tackles and Alex Anderson eight.

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DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
Citizen Participation Plan Revision

The City of Niles is accepting comments to obtain the views of City of Niles citizens concerning the City of Niles Community Development Block Grant Citizen Participation Plan Revision.
An electronic version of the proposed of the Citizen Participation Plan may be viewed on the City's website at www.nilesmi.org
You may send a letter stating your opinions or position to the City of Niles (Attn. Community Development), 333 N. 2nd St., Niles, MI 49120, or email cdbgcordinator@nilesmi.org. All written opinions/positions must be received on or before 11:30am EST on 10/6/2025.
The City of Niles will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those individuals with disabilities who wish to provide comment upon receiving at least three days' notice. Any such individual requiring such aids or services should contact the City by writing or calling the following: City of Niles ADA Coordinator, 333 N. 2nd Street, Niles, MI, phone (269) 683-4700 or 683-1313 to access the TDD (a non-voice terminal device) for individuals with hearing or speech impairment.

DATED: September 9, 2025

Sanya Vitale, CDBG Coordinator

0900

LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Berrien

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO.
2025-0184-DE-R

Court Address
811 Port St., St. Joseph, MI
49085

Telephone no.
269-983-7111

Estate of: Rex L. Carlile
Date of birth: 10/01/1939

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The
decedent, Rex L. Carlile, died
April 10, 2024. Creditors of the
decedent are notified that all
claims against the estate will be
forever barred unless presented to
Dean A. Carlile, personal
representative, or to both the
probate court at 811 Port St.
St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the
personal representative within
4 months after the date of
publication of this notice.

Date 09/12/2025

Thomas M. Walz P74044
Attorney name Bar No.
509 W. Washington St.
Address
South Bend, IN 46601
City, State, Zip
574-232-5988
Telephone no.

Dean A. Carlile
Personal representative
52709 Blue Winged Trail
Address
South Bend, IN 46628
City, state, zip
574-309-4776
Telephone

0900

LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
BERRIEN COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO. and JUDGE
2025-0641-DE-R

Court address:
811 Port Street, St. Joseph,
Michigan 49085

Court phone no.
269-983-7111

Estate of Alana Adele Watry
Date of birth: 09/06/1937

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The
decedent, Alana Adele Watry,
died 03/17/2025. Creditors of the
decedent are notified that all
claims against the estate will be
forever barred unless presented to
Terry Kay Pritchard, personal
representative, or to both the
probate court at 811 Port Street,
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085 and
the personal representative
within 4 months after the date
of publication of this notice.

Date: 09/04/2025

Attorney: John R. Colip
Bar no. P25250
12 Longmeadow Village Drive,
Suite 100
Niles, MI 49120
269-591-6915

Terry Kay Pritchard
Personal representative(s)
1910 Bell Road
Niles, MI 49120
269-362-3244

0900

LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
CASS COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

CASE NO.
2025-136-DE
JUDGE
Hon. Carol M. Bealor

Estate of:
James Ellis Alkire
Date of birth: 10/09/1956

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The
decedent, James Ellis Alkire,
died 02/15/2025. Creditors of the
decedent are notified that all
claims against the estate will be
forever barred unless presented to
Deborah Maxine Alkire,
personal representative, or to
both the probate court at 60296
M62 St. 10, Cassopolis, MI
49031 and the personal
representative within 4 months
after the date of publication of
this notice.

Joshua T. McFarland P75437
Attorney name Bar no.
600 Pine Street
Address
Clare, MI 48617
City, state, zip
989-386-3456
Telephone

Deborah Maxine Alkire
Personal representative
3070 Hoyt Street
Address
Niles, MI 49120
City, state, zip
269-405-0890
Telephone

0900

LEGALS

THE CASS COUNTY LAND
BANK AUTHORITY NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING FOR
MICHIGAN COMMUNITY DE-
VELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
(CDBG) MI NEIGHBORHOOD
PROGRAM

The Cass County Land Bank
Authority will conduct a public
hearing on September 29, 2025,
at 4pm at the Cassopolis County
Building 120 N. Broadway, Suite
312 for the purpose of affording
citizens an opportunity to
examine and submit comments
on the proposed application for
a CDBG grant.

The Cass County Land Bank
Authority proposes to use
\$1,275,000 for Homeowner
Rehabilitation to provide home
repairs and improvements to
homes occupied by low and
moderate-income homeowners
to address health, safety and
energy efficiency needs. No
persons will be displaced as a
result of the proposed activities.

Further information, including a
copy of the Cass County's
Community Development Plan
and CDBG application, is
available for review. To inspect
the documents, please contact
Hope Anderson, Chairman, at
hopea@cassco.org or review at
120 N. Broadway, Suite 220,
Cassopolis, MI. Comments may
be submitted in writing through
September 29, 2025, or made in
person at the public hearing.

Citizen views and comments on
the proposed application are
welcome.

The Cass County Land Bank
Authority
Hope Anderson, Chairman
(269) 445-4468

0900

LEGALS

COUNTY OF BERRIEN

NOTICE OF PUBLIC
HEARING ON THE ADOPTION
OF A BROWNFIELD
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR
THE COUNTY OF BERRIEN
PURSUANT TO AND IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PROVISIONS OF ACT 381 OF
THE PUBLIC ACTS OF THE
STATE OF MICHIGAN OF
1996, AS AMENDED

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT a
public hearing shall be held
before the Berrien County Board
of Commissioners Committee of
the Whole on October 2, 2025,
at 8:35am in the County Board
Chambers, 701 Main Street, St.
Joseph, Michigan. The purpose
of the hearing is to consider
whether to approve a Brownfield
Redevelopment Plan submitted
on behalf of Allen Edwin Homes
and pertaining to property
located within the Royaltown
Township, Michigan, having the
following tax identification
number: 11-17-0018-0025-02-3.

The proposed brownfield plan
would allow the developer of the
property to be reimbursed for
eligible costs incurred to prepare
the brownfield property for
redevelopment. Eligible costs
include environmental and/or site
preparation costs, public and
private infrastructure necessary
to support the development and
housing development activities.

All information related to the
proposed plan is available for
public inspection at the offices of
the Berrien County Community
Development Department, 701
Main Street, St. Joseph, between
the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30
p.m. on weekdays. Any aspect of
the proposed plan amendment
may be discussed at the public
hearing and all interested
persons will be given an
opportunity to be heard.

0900

LEGALS

ONTWA TOWNSHIP CASS
COUNTY, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the
Ontwa Township Planning
Commission will hold a public
hearing on Wednesday, October
1, 2025, at 6:15 pm., at the
Ontwa Township Hall located at
26225 US 12, Edwardsburg, MI
49112, to consider a proposed
conditional rezoning request.

The proposed rezoning is
summarized as follows:
CBM62RE LLC / Chhaya
Trivedi has applied to rezone
approximately 1.45 acres of land
located at 71115 M62 Parcel No.
14-090-020-016-01 from the AR
Agricultural-Residential District
to the C-2 Commercial District.

Copies of the application, the
zoning ordinance, and the zoning
map are available for public
viewing during regular business
hours at the Township Hall,
26225 US 12, Edwardsburg, MI
49112, or on the Township
website: www.ontwatwp.org.
Written comments will be
received from any interested
persons by the Ontwa Township
Clerk at the Ontwa Township
Hall during regular business
hours and may be further
received by the Planning
Commission during the public
hearing. Oral comments will be
taken during the hearing.
If you are planning to attend this
hearing and are handicapped
requiring any special assistance,
please notify the Township Clerk
by calling (269) 663-2347 as
soon as possible.

Tina VanBelle,
Ontwa Township Clerk

0900

LEGALS

Public Notice
INVITATION TO BID DISTRICT
SNOW PLOWING

The Dowagiac Union School
District shall accept sealed bids
for **snow plowing**. Bids shall be
accepted until 1:00 pm Tuesday,
October 7, 2025, at Dowagiac
Union Schools Administrative
Offices, 243 South Front Street,
Dowagiac, MI 49047. All bids
should be clearly marked
"District Snow Plowing". At
1:00 p.m., all bids will be publicly
opened. A pre-bid meeting will
be held on Tuesday, September
30, 2025, at 9 a.m. at the
Maintenance Building, 29100
Pokagon Street, Dowagiac, MI
49047. Bid documents may be
picked up at Dowagiac Union
Schools Administrative Offices,
243 South Front Street,
Dowagiac, MI 49047, or by
contacting Jamie Williamson,
Maintenance Supervisor,
Dowagiac Union Schools, 29100
Pokagon Street, Dowagiac, MI
49047. Phone: 269-782-4480,
jwilliamson@dowagiacschools.org.
All questions will be submitted
via e-mail and answered via
e-mail **Dowagiac Union
Schools is an E.O.E**

0900

LEGALS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF NILES
PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission of the
City of Niles will hold a public
hearing on October 6, 2025, at
the Niles City Hall, located at 333
N. 2nd Street, Niles, Michigan
49120, to consider a recom-
mendation to the City Council for
the adoption of the following
amendments to the City of Niles
Zoning Ordinance:

1. Article 5, Section 506,
Regional Commercial,
sub-section 506.F, Additional
Requirements, is proposed to
be amended to add Part 7,
Building Façade Require-
ments, which is intended to
require design standards for
buildings in the RC, Regional
Commercial zoning district.

2. Article 7, Section 704.G,
Sign Illumination, is proposed
to be amended and reformat-
ted to add requirements for
compliance with Section 905,
and to simplify permitted
hours of illumination.

The proposed Zoning Ordinance
text amendment is available at
the City of Niles City Hall for
public examination and review
during normal business hours.
Comments may be made in
person during the public hearing
or written comments may be
submitted beforehand. Written
comments should be received by
the City by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on
the day of the public hearing and
addressed to the Niles Planning
Commission, at 333 N. 2nd
Street, Niles, Michigan 49120.

Brian Thomas, Chair
City of Niles Planning
Commission

0900

LEGALS

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction
Saturday September 27, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Unit # Name

10 Charmin Kelly

22 Amber Bedenfield

28 Emalee Anderson

56 Nathan Thomas

57 Caleb Dubik

67 Jerome Jankowiak

77 Stoney Tittle

82 Ericka Pitone

94 Joshua Thompson

116 Melissa Kaeding

125/179 Steve Kelley

127/633 Chris Norris

168 Gene Robertson

173 George Tovey III

177 Larry Wegrecki

183 Cindy Fisher

184/66 Mary Anderson

191 Alan Smith

192 Patricia Yoder

195 Daniel Beushauser

196 Colton Wedgworth

205 Nancy Bombrys

228/367 Shawnette Booker

272 Kurt Shepard

273 Tony Pompey

278 Chelsie Carlyle

284 Kathleen Peterson

145/467/468 Michael Merritt

321 James Browning

330 Sheila Kollars

342 Terrence Moss

346 DaMonica Williams

351 Lyman Bybie

379 Bobbie Helms

389 Parnell Jenkins

399 Les Hart

403 Xavier Williams

410/534 Rebecca Coleman

427 McCade Reese

429 Aaron Haynes

432 Mare Williams

449 Ronald Schmal

451 Jean Fitch

513 Justin Scott

518 Dawn Lintz

530 Justin Landis

541 Nicole Hurt

545 Candy Whitmire

577 Stephanie Pellow

605 Michael Lewark

613 Nicole Jones

616 Nathaniel Sherres

638 Britney Stanczyk

660 Steve Sharrai

665 Rodney Prescott

677/567 Julie Potate

0900

LEGALS

Niles U-Store-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI49120. Auction
Saturday September 27, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.

23 Miranda Wendzel

57 Nathan Haynes

54 Cynthia Swisher

0900

LEGALS

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles,
MI 49120. Auction Saturday September 27, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.

59 Shara Brody

97 Blake King

126A John Daniel

200A Mike Nidiffer

311A Michael Tapia

140 Ronnie West

168 Jerol Williams Jr.

206 Larry Morbach

227 Jennifer Nichols

230 Felisha Liberty

238/466 James Diss

250 Robert Clayton/Jessica Vissik

292 The Woodshed Crafts

346 Joe Jones

372 Albert Felder

373 Rhonda Sue Outlaw

379 Amanda McCombs

389 Llandon Ross

423 Tianne Double

426 James Shilling Jr.

428 Brian Walls

452 Aaron Smith

481 Natasha Libertowski

496 Nicole Brugh

521 Paul Mowrey

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FORECLOSURE NOTICE (ALL COUNTIES) AS A DEBT COLLECTOR, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement – Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 A.M. a.m./p.m. on October 22, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default having been made in the terms and conditions of a certain mortgage made by Samuel L. Butler and Brenda Butler of Cass County, Michigan, Mortgage to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated the 7th day of February, 2005, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds, for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on the 4th day of March, 2005, Liber 00905, Page 0596, of the Cass County Records on which mortgage there is claimed to be due, at the date of this notice, for principal of \$127,657.11 plus accrued interest at 8.00000% percent per annum. Which said premises are described as follows: All that certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of Volinia, in the County of Cass and State of Michigan and described as follows to wit: Part of the Northwest fractional Quarter of Section 19, Town 5 South, Range 14 West, described as commencing at the North Quarter post of said Section; thence West along the North line of said Section 493.66 feet to the Point of Beginning of the land herein described; thence South at right angles to the North line, 600.00 feet; thence West parallel with the North line of said Section, +/- 160 feet to the West line of the East half of the Northeast Quarter of said Northwest Quarter; thence Northerly along said West line +/- 600 feet to the North line of said Section 19; thence East along said North line, 160.00 feet to the Place of Beginning. ALSO, the East half of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 19, Town 5 South, Range 14 West. More correctly described as: The East half of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 19, Town 5 South, Range 14 West. Commonly known as: 21515 Crane Street, Dowagiac, MI 49047 Tax ID: 14-140-019-007-02 and 14-140-019-007-11 If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale the borrower, pursuant to MCLA 600.3278 will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. The redemption period shall be six months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. Dated: September 20, 2025, By: Benjamin N. Hoen #P-81415 Weltman, Weinberg & Reis Co., L.P.A. 5990 West Creek Road, Suite 200 Independence, OH 44131 Telephone: 216-739-5100 Fax: 216-363-4034 Email: bhoen@weltman.com WWR# 25-000793-1 (09-20)(10-11)

0900

LEGALS

NOTICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION FOR THE NOVEMBER SPECIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2025 CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF HOWARD TOWNSHIP:

You are hereby notified to register to vote or to change your address for the November 4, 2025, Special Election.

To register, visit any Secretary of State Office, the Cass County Clerk's Office or Howard Township Clerk's Office. Electors who wish to register with their Township Clerks are advised to call ahead for office hours. Howard Township's Office Hours are Tuesday-Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

On the ballot

County of Cass Medical Care Facility Millage Renewal .4881mills for 10 years.

Full text of the ballot proposition may be obtained at the Cass County Clerk's Office, 120 N. Broadway, Cassopolis MI 49031; Telephone (269) 445-4464.

You may register to vote with the Township at the following location:

Howard Township Office
1345 Barron Lake Road
Niles, MI 49120

1000

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OUTDOORS



A swallow-tailed kite on Aug. 6 at Warren Dunes State Park.

Photo provided / Josh Duis

Swallow-tailed kite a visitor from the south

Josh Duis of Niles and three other birders were lucky to catch a glimpse of a swallow-tailed kite on Aug. 6 at Warren Dunes State Park.

Jonathan Wuepper
Southwest Michigan Wildlife



Duis and friends were conducting a hawk watch at Mount Randall when this southern raptor suddenly appeared from the east, flew over the dunes and then continued flying south. It was not relocated.

The swallow-tailed kite is an elegant black-and-white hawk with a deep forked tail. The

bird is often described as having a graceful, flowing flight. It is about 22 inches in length and its wingspan is just over four feet.

The swallow-tailed kite's summer range is the Atlantic coast from South Carolina to southern Florida. It is also found along the Gulf coast. It rarely ranges north of central Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia, and also lives in Central and South America. Birds that summer in the southern US migrate to South America for the winter.

The sighting on Aug. 6 is the third record of this species in Berrien County. The first occurred May 2-16, 2003 in Chikaming Township. It was initially located by Kirk Schrader at the Riverside Cemetery near the intersection of Three Oaks and Warren Woods Roads. The second was on Aug. 4, 2022 along Tower Hill Road just south of Warren Dunes State Park, by Mark Vanderpoel and Linda Coady. Also noteworthy was a

swallow-tailed kite seen on Aug. 21, 2013 in Jefferson Township, Cass County.

On Aug. 31, Don Estep of LaPorte and others went bird watching on a boat out in Lake Michigan. Birdwatching by boat has become popular in recent years, because it allows birdwatchers to see birds that rarely come near the shoreline. Estep, who is a photographer, captured images of a Sabine's gull during his late August offshore adventure. Sabine's gulls nest on islands in the Arctic Ocean, northern Alaska and west coast of Greenland and are rarely seen on the Great Lakes. Sabine's gulls typically migrate out in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans away from the shore.

Estep was still in Berrien County waters when he took the photos of the juvenile Sabine's gull, which was on its way to the Southern Hemisphere for the winter.

I've also included a photo in this week's column Estep took of an adult Sabine's gull, many miles from land but still in Berrien County, on Sept. 15, 2024. Note the gull's black head and yellow bill.

Interestingly, an injured Sabine's gull was found in September 2000 on M-62 south of Dowagiac, Cass County. The bird was brought to Sarett Nature Center where it died. The carcass was sent to the University of Michigan's Museum of Zoology, where it remains in archive as a study skin. This represents one of the few, or perhaps only, inland records of a Sabine's gull in Michigan.

Jonathan Wuepper is an area naturalist. Report your sightings to him at wuepperj@gmail.com



Photo provided / Don Estep

A juvenile Sabine's gull on Aug. 31, a few miles offshore of New Buffalo while still in Berrien County waters.



An adult sabine's gull on Sept. 15, 2024, in Lake Michigan.

Sea lamprey control planned for Paw Paw River

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel will apply lampricides to the Paw Paw River (Berrien and Van Buren Counties) to kill sea lamprey larvae burrowed in the stream bottom. Applications will be conducted between Sept. 23 – Oct. 2, in accordance with State of Michigan permits. Application dates are tentative and may be changed based upon local weather or stream conditions near the time of treatment.

Sea lamprey larvae live in hundreds of Great Lakes tributaries and transform to parasites that migrate to the Great Lakes and kill fish by feeding on their blood and body

fluids. Failure to kill sea lamprey larvae in streams will result in significant damage to the Great Lakes fishery.

Infested tributaries must be treated on a regular basis with lampricides to control sea lamprey populations.

Extensive preparations and precautions are required to deliver a safe and effective stream treatment. Prior to treatment, trained personnel collect data on stream water chemistry and discharge. In addition, they may conduct on-site toxicity tests and stream flow studies with non-harmful dyes that cause stream water to appear red or green.

Lampricides are carefully metered into the stream for approximately 12 hours, and continually analyzed at predetermined sites to ensure proper concentrations are maintained as they move downstream.

Applicators are trained and certified by regulatory agencies for aquatic applications of pesticides.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency have reviewed human health and environmental safety data for lampricides, and in 2003 concluded that the lampricides (Lampricide and Bayluscide) pose no unreasonable

risk to the general population and the environment when applied at concentrations necessary to control larval sea lampreys. However, as with any pesticide, the public is advised to use discretion and minimize unnecessary exposure.

Lampricides are selectively toxic to sea lampreys, but a few fish, insect, and broadleaf plants are sensitive.

Persons confining bait fish or other organisms in stream water are advised to use an alternate water source because lampricides may cause mortality among aquatic organisms stressed by crowding and handling.

Shark chomps on seal close to Massachusetts beaches

By RICK SOBEY
Boston Herald (TNS)

BOSTON — It was only a matter of time before a white shark showed up for breakfast.

Shark researcher John Chisholm called it when he spotted a colony of seals off Plymouth's Manomet Point over the weekend.

Soon after, a great white shark chomped on one of the seals – lead-

ing to the seal's likely death and triggering beach closures.

"This should serve as a reminder that we're in peak white shark season," posted Chisholm, who's an adjunct scientist at the New England Aquarium.

"With warm weather in the forecast, you need to remain vigilant when entering the water!" he added.

The seal survived the initial bite and made it to the rocks off Stage

Point. But it was a "mortal wound," Chisholm said.

"The wounds are severe and it most likely won't survive," he added.

Plymouth White Horse Beach and Long Beach were closed to swimming on Sunday, as the beaches had red flag warnings due to the white shark off Manomet Point.

The beaches reopened on Monday under yellow flags – meaning "use caution."

"White shark activity is at its peak from August through October in Massachusetts," the Town of Plymouth posted. "Please note that Manomet Point has an established seal haul-out area, which attracts white sharks."

Meanwhile, Monday was the seventh anniversary of Arthur Medici's death after he was bitten by a white shark off Newcomb Hollow beach in Wellfleet.



Sarett Nature Center Sarett Nature Stewards:

2-4 p.m. each Wednesday. This program is a way to experience Sarett in a whole different way. By being a nature steward you are helping Sarett but you also gain a sense of well-being. Sarett's crew will teach you many different skills such as collecting viable seeds for future planting, how to identify invasive species from native ones, removing invasive plants, and more. For ages 10 and older.

Stream surveying: 1-3 p.m. Sept. 28. Stream surveys are a great way to learn the health of our waterways. The more weird insects you find the better the health! Come learn stream survey protocol and find some cool macroinvertebrates while you're at it! Be prepared to get wet and muddy. Old tennis shoes, muck boots or waders are recommended. This program is free to all. Call 269-927-4832 to register.

Email info for Get Outdoors to sports@TheHP.com, or call 429-1294 by Wednesday.

Santa Monica's pink waves improving water quality

By GRACE TOOHEY
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Over the next two weeks, surfers and beachgoers in Santa Monica may spot waves that have a pink, fluorescent hue – but officials say not to worry.

The luminous, pink color spreading across the Santa Monica Bay is from a temporary, nontoxic dye that researchers are using to study how ocean circulation might contribute to the bay's poor water quality.

The project kicked off Monday morning, as UCLA and Heal the Bay researchers discharged the first of four batches of the pink dye near the Santa Monica Pier.

"By following where the dye goes, we will better understand how the breakwater changes the environment around it, providing insight into Santa Monica beach's poor water quality," Isabella Arzeno-Soltero, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at UCLA and a researcher on the project, said in a statement.

Although the pink dye on Monday didn't appear to create many "bright pink waves," as researchers warned might be the case, additional bouts of the dye – or the fluorescent rhodamine water tracer dye – will be released later this month.

But the fact that the dye seemed to dissipate quickly Monday didn't mean the first phase won't lead to important data, said Gabriela Carr, a researcher in the project and doctoral student at UCLA's Samueli School of Engineering.

"It was a big success today," Carr said. "The dye is pink but it's also fluorescent, so that's kind of our main tracker."

A boat with "finely tuned fluorescent monitors" would remain in the bay for 24 hours, Carr said, and at least 10 additional trackers will remain attached to buoys through the end of the month, when additional dye drops will occur.

The study is intended to help researchers understand how the man-made breakwater that was built in the 1930s in Santa Monica Bay, often visible during low tide, might hurt water circulation and, therefore, water quality. Santa Monica Pier routinely tops the yearly list of the state's dirtiest beaches by environmental nonprofit Heal the Bay.

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